

MYSTIC RADICAL

Mystic Radical Part 1 | Discussion Notes

READING PSALM 84

Throughout this series we are looking at Psalm 84 and asking how we balance having a faith that is inward focused and spiritually deep but also outward focused and makes a difference in the world - or how we can be both mystics and radicals.

You may want to start the session with something called a 'Lectio Divina', or in other words a meditation on the psalm. If so, do the following:

1. Ask everyone to find a comfortable position and close their eyes
2. Then read through Psalm 84 with a focus on just letting the words wash over you - encourage the group not to fall into 'study mode' but just to listen to the words and ask God to speak to them
3. Then - after giving a minute or so to meditate - read the Psalm again, this time asking God to point out a specific word or phrase that he wants to highlight
4. Now come back together and ask people to share how they found the experience and if they felt God speaking.

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Philip explained that the Psalm is split up into three sections by three different 'blessings': "Blessed are those who dwell in your house", "Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage" and "Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you." For many of us we can fall into being either mystics who have a deeper personal faith or radicals who have a faith that is all about action.

The first section is all about how great it is to be in God's presence and how we as followers of Jesus should be looking to develop this deep, personal relationship with him. We should be mystics.

- What does "blessed are those who dwell in your house" mean to you? What does it look like for you to be in God's presence?
- How has summer impacted your personal faith? Have you grown deeper in faith or found yourself spending less time with God?
- How would you like to grow your 'mystic' side this year? Is there a particular discipline or aspect of personal faith you want to grow in?

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The second section talks about people 'whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka". Philip explained that the Valley of Baka translates as 'the Valley of Tears' - it's a desert place of pain and suffering. According to the Psalm, those who are blessed are the people who "make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools". They dig wells together as a community and God sends the rain to turn the desert into an oasis.

- Where have you seen people turning deserts into springs in the Metro community or in Bristol in general?
- What stops us from being radicals that can go into the tough places and bring life?

- Is there a Valley of Baka in your life that you feel God has called you to walk through and help to transform? It could be a place, a cause or just a relationship you have.

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You should have a bit of an idea so far on where people fall between being Mystics and Radicals. If not, this activity might help get people thinking. Ask people to put their hand up for either a) or b) to the following questions to see which side people fall on.

- I feel more connected to God when I am a) in my room alone or b) out serving others
- I spend more time a) reading my Bible or b) reading or watching documentaries about social justice issues
- Over the course of a year I will have more days where I a) fast or b) volunteer time with the poor
- I find it easier to connect with God when I'm a) listening to worship music on my own or b) with my church community

Psalm 84 makes it clear that we should be both. Or as Philip put it, mystics trapped in the bodies of radicals. So break into smaller groups of 3 and 4 to pray for each other that we would grow in areas that we feel weaker in.